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ABSTRACT

Danish adult vocational training activities take the form of specifically targeted initial and continued training for employed and unemployed adults. Planning, development, and adaptation of vocational training programs (AMU programs) are characterized by tripartite cooperation among public authorities and organizations of employers and employees. The 24 independent AMU centers with units spread nationwide have specialized courses and function as residential schools. Technical and business schools also organize AMU training courses. The Vocational Training Council includes representatives of social partners and public authorities who advise the Minister of Labor who has overall responsibility for the adult vocational training programs and for legislation. A committee for continued training, National Labor Market Authority, or training institutions may draw up training programs. The National Labor Market Authority must approve the training institution for offering an officially recognized vocational training activity. The adult vocational training programs include the following: vocational training courses that give participants formal competence, integrated training courses, individual identification of competence, and enterprise-oriented training courses. Ordinary adult vocational training courses are free of charge for participants. User charges have begun to be introduced. The Minister of Labor is also responsible for Danish participation in a number of European Union programs. (YLB)

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ED 410 381

DENMARK

LABOUR MARKET POLICY

Adult Vocational Training

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Foreword

A well-trained and highly qualified labour force is a pre-condition for a dynamic and flexible labour market. Education, training and continued training programmes are a central element of the labour market policy.

The needs of the enterprises as regards the qualifications required from the employees are in process of constant change. The education/training or the skills which were appropriate yesterday or today will be insufficient tomorrow. Education/training and skills must be up-dated and developed during the entire working life of a person. This is a big challenge for the vocational training system which is responsible for developing training programmes that will at any time match the needs of the labour market.

On 1 January 1997 the budgetary restrictions on vocational training activities were lifted and free and unrestricted admission to training activities was introduced. The training institutions are now free to plan and offer training activities on the basis of local demand and the needs on the local labour market. The increased flexibility makes it easier to meet the demand for training. There are now ample opportunities for both unemployed persons and employees to up-grade their skills. These opportunities should be fully used.

This booklet describes the responsibilities and the organisation of the adult vocational training system.

Minister of Labour Jytte Andersen
March 1997

Adult vocational training programmes

A long tradition for adult vocational training is a characteristic feature of the Danish labour market policy. In Denmark targeted vocational training for adults has for a long time been considered to be *also* a public responsibility. The first legislation on retraining and vocational training for semi-skilled workers was introduced as early as in 1960.

The vocational training system offers training to *persons who are already in employment as well as to unemployed persons*. In many others countries the training/continued training of persons who are in employment is considered to be solely the responsibility of the employer. The public authorities give offers of training only to unemployed persons, disabled persons and other disadvantaged groups on the labour market.

It is also a characteristic feature of the Danish labour market policy that we do not consider *training* to be a once-and-for-all event. We consider education/training to be *an on-going, life- long process* with opportunities at all stages of a person's working life for participation in training in accordance with the needs of the enterprises and the personal preferences and wishes of individual persons.

Adult vocational training activities take the form of specifically targeted training and continued training for adults and have the following *objectives*:

- to give, maintain and improve the vocational skills of the participants in accordance with the needs and background of the enterprises, the labour market and the individual persons and in line with the technological and social development.
- to solve restructuring and adaptation problems on the labour market in the short perspective, and
- to contribute to a general lift in the qualifications on the labour market in the longer perspective.

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The vocational training system is to a growing extent organising long integrated training programmes which will give the participants broader and more advanced vocational skills. This is done for instance by combining general education elements with the vocational training elements.

The qualifications which a person obtains by participating in a specific training programme are formally recognised by the social partners and well-known and accepted on the labour market generally. These training programmes give nationally recognised competence.

As so many other fields of the Danish labour market the vocational training system[1] is characterised by ***tripartite cooperation***. The planning, development and adaptation of vocational training programmes (AMU-programmes) take place on a current basis in a close cooperation between the public authorities and the organisations of employers and employees.

[1] *Vocational training in Denmark comprises „labour market training programmes" and "vocational training programmes". The labour market programmes are mainly targeted on adults and fall under the competence of the Ministry of Labour. Vocational training programmes are primarily basic training programmes for young persons and fall under the competence of the Ministry of Education. Both types of training programmes are offered by both AMU-centres (vocational training centres) (the Ministry of Labour) and by technical and business schools (the Ministry of Education).*

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The organisation of adult vocational training programmes

The organsiation of adult vocational training activities is based on a broad cooperation with the social partners who are involved in the work to identify training needs. and to develop and determine the content of the training programmes as well as training of teachers.

The Minister of Labour has the overall responsibility for the adult vocational training programmes and for the legislation existing in this field. The administration of the adult vocational training system is the responsibility of the National Labour Market Authority (AMS) which is also responsible for the public employment service system.

There are *24 independent AMU-centres* with a number of units spread all over the country. Some centres have specialised in courses which require special equipment or demand ample space (for instance cranes and heavy road construction and maintenance machines) and receive participants from all over the country. They therefore also function as residential schools which accommodate the participants during their participation in the training course.

AMU-training courses are also organised by technical and business schools, and in some cases also by private training institutions. As regards vocational training courses which give the participants formally recognised competence about half of these courses take place in AMU-centres and the rest in technical and business schools and other training institutions.

The National Labour Market Authority is responsible for ensuring that the content and quality of the AMU-programmes will meet present and future needs on the labour market. This is done in a *close cooperation with the social partners* within the framework set by the legislation.

The tripartite cooperation runs as a red thread from the central to the decentralised level. i.e. from the Educational Council to the local cooperation in the individual training institutions.

The vocational training system (AMU)

The Vocational Training Council

The Minister of Labour

The Department of Labour

The Council for Continued Training

The National Labour Market Authority

24 AMU-centres[1], technical schools and business schools

1 Each AMU-centre is run by a board (which includes representatives of, among others, the social partners) which is responsible for the activities of the centre and the same applies to technical and business schools.

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The vocational training system offers training in more than 50 sectors/occupations. A committee for continued training has been set up for each sector/occupation and together with the National Labour Market Authority and the Vocational Training Council these committees are responsible for the content of the vocational training programmes.

The Vocational Training Council

The Vocational Training Council is a joint body composed of representatives of the social partners as well as public authorities. The Vocational Training Council advises the Minister of Labour on matters concerning vocational training programmes, including the dimensioning of training activities.

The Vocational Training Council may set up permanent working groups. A working group has been set up to deal with approval of vocational training plans and development activities and a different working group is responsible for dealing with matters concerning needs (dimensioning), capacity. etc.

The Vocational Training Council may also set up ad hoc working groups to examine special questions in connection with the activities of the Council.

Continued training committees

The organisations of employers and employees have presently set up 53 committees for continued training, which are, among other things. responsible for developing training programmes in their respective sectors or occupational fields. The committees for continued training also make recommendations to the Vocational Training Committee on the needs for training and are responsible for the training of teachers.

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The offers available within the adult vocational training system

It is normally the Vocational Training Council which approves the individual training programmes which have been drawn up by a committee for continued training or by the National Labour Market Authority. But the training institutions may also draw up and approve certain training programmes. Each training programme is described in a *training plan* and the training plan must be accompanied by a *pedagogical manual*. The training institution draws up a training plan which describes how the training can be adapted to local conditions.

The training institution must be approved for offering an officially recognised vocational training activity. It is, in most cases, the National Labour Market Authority which approves the training institution on the recommendation of a committee for continued training.

Training programmes are being developed with a view to being implemented in the form of an uninterrupted period of full-time training, but they may also be implemented in the form of separate periods of part-time training, evening courses and weekend courses or as combinations of several of these forms. However, pedagodical considerations may restrict the choice of implementation of the training programmes.

The training institution must guarantee that the participants satisfy the conditions for admission to the training courses and that the courses are implemented in accordance with the training plan and that the quality of the training courses is satisfactory.

The training institution issues certificates to participants who have completed a vocational training programme with a satisfactory result.

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Vocational training programmes

The adult vocational training programmes are the following:

- Vocational training courses which give the participants formal competence
- Integrated training courses
- Individual identification of competence
- Enterprise-oriented training courses.

Vocational training courses giving formal competence

These courses give the participants nationally recognised competence. The target group is mainly persons in employment, but it is also possible for unemployed persons to participate in these courses. The training courses are of short duration, typically 1 to 3 weeks, and not more than 6 weeks.

The individual training courses typically form part of one or more training structures which start with basic training and continue with more specialised training courses. It may be a requirement that the participants obtain practical work experience in between their participation in the courses. In some sectors and occupations it is possible to continue a vocational training programme and be credited with vocational skills obtained at AMU-courses (standard merits).

The adult vocational training programmes (the AMU-programmes) normally include both theoretical instruction and practical activities and courses at the intermediate level also often include general subjects.

During participating in an adult vocational training course the participants may in some cases also be offered *individual supplementary lessons*, for instance in Danish and arithmetic.

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The training may be organised as long-distance education and as open workshop training. This means that participants may be admitted on a current basis.

Integrated training programmes

There are many different types of integrated training programmes which may be adapted to different target groups, such as for instance employed persons, unemployed persons, young persons and refugees or immigrants.

There are both centrally approved national training programmes as well as decentralised courses. The central courses are training programmes which give the participants competence within the adult vocational training programmes and which may form part of continued training activities. The decentralised training activities may be organised by the training institutions so that they can be adapted to the needs on the local labour market. At such courses the participants only obtain competence in the vocational AMU-programmes of which they form part.

The integrated training programmes include 4 main types:

- Central ordinary training programmes
- Decentralised ordinary training programmes
- Central specially organised training programmes
- Decentralised specially organised training programmes.

As the different types training programmes cater for different target groups differences also exist as regards the elements which form part of the programmes. They normally include adult vocational training activities and general vocational training elements, but also periods of practical work experience, other types of training (for instance individual subjects at HF-level (HF – secondary preparatory education) but not with examinations.

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and reading courses), elements of specific labour market programmes (for instance vocational education), individual supplementary training, etc.

The integrated training programmes have a duration of 6 weeks to 18 months. Ordinary programmes have a duration of up to 36 weeks and specially organised training programmes up to 18 months. The ordinary programmes are normally for persons in employment, whereas the specially organised programmes are primarily intended for unemployed persons.

Individual identification of competence

The purpose of courses for individual identification of competence it that the individual participant should identify his or her vocational competence and general qualifications with a view to subsequent participation in an adult vocational training course or other specifically targeted vocational training courses.

The target group for these courses is unemployed persons and persons in employment and the courses have a duration of between 1 week and 3 weeks depending upon the individual participant's background and needs.

The training takes place primarily in workshops and comprises vocational and educational guidance, practical identification of vocational skills and general qualifications. This is all seen in relation to the vocational field(s) chosen by the individual participants.

The committees for continued training may participate in the development of special descriptions of the content of training programmes within their specific vocational fields.

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Enterprise-oriented courses

The purpose of the enterprise-oriented courses is to meet special job-specific needs of the individual enterprises. The aim is to strengthen the qualifications of persons who are employed or have been promised employment in the enterprise.

The enterprise-oriented courses meet a need for training on the part of the enterprises which is not fully met by the ordinary adult vocational training programmes or by integrated training courses. Enterprise-oriented courses may have the same duration as the ordinary vocational training course on which the planned enterprise-oriented course is based. The plan for an enterprise-oriented course may be based either on an adult vocational training programme or on a central ordinary vocational training activity. In both cases the plan for the enterprise-oriented course must include between 1/2 and 1/3 of the adult vocational training activity on which the plan is based.

The training institution issues a certificate to the participants who have completed an enterprise-oriented course with a satisfactory result.

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Financing

Ordinary adult vocational training courses are, as a starting point, free of charge for the participants. In connection with enterprise-oriented courses the enterprises cover some of the expenses. In the case of special tailor-made courses the enterprises pay the full costs. All persons who participate in publicly financed vocational training courses are normally entitled to financial compensation. The amount of the course allowance corresponds to the maximum rate of unemployment benefits. In 1997 this rate is 525 DKK per day which is taxable income for the participants. In addition participants in courses may receive a transportation allowance and financial support for board and lodging. In connection with the enterprise-oriented courses the allowance is reduced to 50 per cent and in connection with special tailor-made courses no allowance is paid to the participants.

All adult vocational training activities are classified in special price categories which determine the rate which the state pays per training week irrespective of where the training takes place. The financial management system is to contribute to making the state-subsidy dependent upon costs. Furthermore, it is to contribute to a better utilisation of capacity and resources.

Charges to users

As part of the harmonisation of the adult vocational training system user charges have been introduced in connection with participation in all adult vocational training courses, except enterprise-oriented courses.

The user charges were introduced in stages. In 1997 the user charge is 200 DKK for each started week of training. This amount will be gradually increased to DKK 350 by year 2000. The user charge may not exceed DKK

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2,000 for an integrated period of training. Persons with a short training background and certain other groups are not required to pay for participation in adult vocational training courses. If an employed person or a self-employed person fails to turn up on the first day of the course, the employer will be charged a cancellation fee of 2.000 DKK.

If the adult vocational training institutions issues special certificates of competence an amount of DKK 500 will be charged.

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International programmes for specifically targeted vocational training

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for the Danish participation in a number of EU programmes. The objective is to realise the intentions within the European Union about the free movement of labour in the Single European Market and to support the Danish efforts to combat unemployment – and, in particular, long-term unemployment – among exposed groups on the labour market.

The European Social Fund (ESF) grants subsidies to the co-financing of specifically targeted vocational training measures, in particular, at the local and regional level. The main aim of the European Social Fund is to combat long-term-unemployment and youth unemployment. The European Social Fund also supports retraining measures for persons in employment.

The National Labour Market Authority is responsible for the overall management of programmes under the ESF and the daily administration of certain ESF programmes.

The Danish Centre for International Programmes (DCIP) administers a number of EU programmes, including some of the ESF programmes. The DCIP has been set up by six labour market organisations, including the two main labour market organisations, the Danish Employers' Confederation (DA) and the Federation of Danish Trade Unions (LO), in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. The purpose is to strengthen the internationalisation of training programmes by means of guidance and information about training programmes within the European Union.

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